



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 10.6.2011  
COM(2011) 343 final

**REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND  
THE COUNCIL**

**Annual Report on the European Union's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection  
Policies and their implementation in 2010**

{SEC(2011) 709 final}

The European Union is one of the world's biggest donors of humanitarian aid, and a key actor in providing emergency relief to victims of man-made and natural disasters. It also promotes respect for, and adherence to, international humanitarian law.

The European Commission, notably through its Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (DG ECHO) aims to save and preserve life but also the environment and property, preventing and alleviating human suffering and safeguarding the integrity and dignity of populations affected by natural or man-made disasters occurring inside or outside the EU. The Commission's mandate encompasses humanitarian assistance and civil protection, the two main instruments at the European Union's disposal to ensure rapid and effective delivery of EU relief assistance to people faced with the immediate consequences of disasters.

The EU's humanitarian assistance, which is distinct from longer-term development aid or foreign policy instruments, is based on the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality. This commitment to principled humanitarian aid is anchored in the Lisbon Treaty.

The European Union's humanitarian aid and civil protection policies enable it to demonstrate in practical terms its commitment to supporting those inside and outside the Union in need of assistance when they are at their most vulnerable. This contributes to fulfilling one of the strategic objectives of the EU's external action, as set out in the Treaty on the European Union.

The importance of humanitarian aid policy is reflected in the appointment of a Commissioner dedicated to humanitarian aid and crisis response in the new Commission. The Civil Protection Mechanism, which has been brought together with humanitarian aid in a single Directorate-General since February 2010, aims to facilitate cooperation in civil protection assistance interventions in the event of major emergencies requiring urgent response.

### **The global context within which the assistance is being delivered**

Many of today's global issues have an impact on both the scale and the nature of the humanitarian and civil protection challenges:

*Changing security threats.* While there has been less conflict between countries since the end of the Cold War, other types of conflict have become more widespread and more complex to tackle. The growing number of weak and failing States has created conditions for protracted instability, violent crises, and civil conflicts throughout South and Central Asia, the Middle East and the African continent.

*Climate change.* Never before has human activity placed the environment and climate of our planet under so much stress. The world is experiencing more extreme weather patterns — drought, floods, storms — than ever before. Climate change is likely in the future to affect the frequency of natural disasters and the scale of their consequences, but also alter the geographic distribution of such emergencies. In many regions of the world, access to basic natural resources, water and agricultural land is becoming more difficult, creating further tensions and 'climate-induced migration'.

Changes in the world economy. Developing and emerging countries are now the new drivers of world growth. It is estimated that, by 2020-2025, the aggregate GDP of the eight major emerging economies will be greater than that of the current G-8. While millions of people are being lifted out of poverty thanks to this growth, development remains very unequal, with Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) remaining out of reach for large sections of the population.

The rising role of non-State actors. NGOs have emerged across the world as important social and political forces; the private sector has increasing power not just in international business and finance but also in societal issues; and the global media influence the conduct of diplomacy and politics through the immediate and emotional impact of their 'breaking news'.

The financial crisis may impact on the resources available to respond to emergencies. This may lead to an even greater need for European solidarity, and underscores the importance of value for money and efficiency in the delivery of assistance.

Consequently, the implementation of humanitarian aid and civil protection is increasingly complex and difficult. Due to the increased frequency and intensity of natural disasters there are more sudden-onset humanitarian crises and in particular mega-disasters such as those which occurred in 2010 in Haiti and Pakistan. Some 373 natural disasters occurred during the year, killing almost 300 000 people and affecting 207 million others worldwide<sup>1</sup>. Asia was the most affected region with 89 % of the total number of victims. 2010 was one of the worst years on record for natural disasters in the past two decades. Man-made humanitarian disasters are still mostly caused by internal civil conflicts, with the civilian population increasingly exposed to violence and suffering. This type of conflict is often marked by disregard for international humanitarian law and principles by belligerents and shrinking of the humanitarian space. Humanitarian access to beneficiaries and the safety and protection of civilian populations and humanitarian workers have become more and more problematic.

Another defining feature is the multiplication of actors appearing on the humanitarian aid scene. In addition to the traditional humanitarian NGOs and international humanitarian organisations, private foundations and companies are playing an increasing role; in some countries military forces are conducting quasi-humanitarian operations; and some peace-keeping forces have protection mandates which may in some cases affect humanitarian action. In some regions, government-to-government assistance or the deployment of military assets are playing an increasing role. This large number of actors brings a variety of motivations, interests and practices. Reaffirming the humanitarian principles of neutrality and non-discrimination becomes all the more important.

### **The EU's humanitarian aid and civil protection activities in 2010**

Through the Commission (DG ECHO), the EU provided needs-based EU humanitarian assistance and facilitated the provision of European in-kind civil protection assistance.

DG ECHO intervenes when and where crises or natural disasters occur, helping millions of affected people throughout the world. In 2010, the EU's response to new or protracted crises totalled €1 115 million and consisted in:

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<sup>1</sup> Source: CRED ([www.cred.be](http://www.cred.be)).

- providing humanitarian assistance to about 151 million people<sup>2</sup> in 80 non-EU countries, of which 39 countries/territories were designated as being in a situation of crisis in DG ECHO's initial planning;
- activating the civil protection mechanism for 28 crises inside and outside the EU.

The initial 2010 budget of €835 million for humanitarian aid was stepped up several times in order to respond to new crises and natural disasters occurring during the year, in particular the two mega-disasters in Haiti and Pakistan.

The humanitarian aid budget was increased by: using the Emergency Aid Reserve; using the European Development Funds earmarked for humanitarian aid in African, Caribbean and Pacific countries; and making transfers from budget lines for other external aid instruments.

Of the total assistance provided in 2010 an estimated 44 % was for natural disasters, 41 % for protracted crises, and 15 % for ad hoc crises and interventions.

**Natural disasters** continued to cause severe damage throughout the world. DG ECHO follows a two-pronged strategy in dealing with this type of disaster:

- rapid response, by providing humanitarian aid and by facilitating and coordinating civil protection assistance provided by EU Member States and countries participating in the Civil Protection Mechanism on a voluntary basis to other States (EU or third countries) upon activation of the Mechanism;
- disaster preparedness, by identifying those geographical areas and populations most vulnerable to natural disasters and for which specific programmes on disaster preparedness are established.

DG ECHO provided **humanitarian assistance** to cope with the consequences of the following disasters:

- floods in Benin, Burkina Faso, Bangladesh, Colombia and Pakistan;
- earthquakes in Chile, Indonesia and Haiti;
- cyclones in South Asia, Central America and Laos;
- droughts in the Greater Horn of Africa, the Sahel region, Bolivia and Djibouti;
- epidemics in the Republic of Congo, Haiti, Malawi, Zimbabwe and South-East Asia.
- Specific assistance was also provided to Mongolia, affected by the Dzud<sup>3</sup> phenomenon, Bangladesh (rodent crisis), the Philippines (El Niño), Guatemala, affected by a series of natural disasters (volcanic eruption, tropical storm, tropical depression after a severe drought in 2009) and Tajikistan, affected by an earthquake, floods and a polio epidemic.

In terms of '**man-made crises**', the inter-ethnic clashes in Southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010 led to an emergency intervention covering a broad range of sectors including shelter, food and medical assistance, legal counselling and protection. In Yemen, the political and humanitarian situation deteriorated, with several open internal conflicts across the country. Instability in the Horn of Africa, particularly in Somalia, is generating an increasing flow of persons landing on Yemen's shores and a growing number of refugees and asylum seekers. The military

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<sup>2</sup> 151 million, of which 101 million through humanitarian aid, 22 million through food aid and 28 million through disaster preparedness activities.

<sup>3</sup> Natural phenomenon arising from continuous heavy snowfall combined with extreme cold and preceded by dry summers.

operations which followed the 2009 internally displaced people (IDPs) crisis in Pakistan triggered new displacements prompting DG ECHO to address the needs of about three million people in dire need of humanitarian assistance. At the end of the year, the Ivory Coast faced a post-electoral crisis, also affecting neighbouring countries.

In addition to these crises, the Commission had to manage several **protracted and complex emergencies**. Some examples are:

- Sudan, where increased insecurity, including frequent targeted kidnapping and harassment of humanitarian actors, and extremely limited access has contributed to the almost complete disappearance of humanitarian space in Darfur. Interventions are largely limited to the camps, with partners working under extremely precarious conditions.
- The occupied Palestinian territory, where the combined effects of the blockade, restriction on access and movements and the impact of the occupation regime in Gaza, Area C of the West Bank and East Jerusalem, maintain the population in a state of high vulnerability and of reliance on external humanitarian assistance.
- In the Democratic Republic of Congo, fighting, sexual violence and displacement of populations have persisted throughout the year although gradual stabilisation has been noted in some parts of the country.

Despite the increase in natural and man-made disasters and the heavier toll that complex emergencies have taken during the last few years, and despite the lack of respect for humanitarian principles and the safety and security of humanitarian workers, there are also cases where the **humanitarian situation has improved**. There are definitely hopeful signs that humanitarian interventions are succeeding where funding is followed by development. This was the case in Sri Lanka and the Philippines in 2010. In Sri Lanka, the humanitarian situation evolved significantly. To date, 75 % of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) have returned to their place of origin while the remainder continue to live with host families or in camps. Through its budget, the EU is still one of the most engaged humanitarian aid donors. It funded humanitarian de-mining, where the actions funded have facilitated the safe return of former IDPs. In addition, there was greater focus on multi-sector interventions, including shelter, livelihood and food assistance components. Protection concerns persisted, with a high proportion of returning families headed by women. Finally, the security situation has remained stable since the end of the conflict and while access for ECHO partners remains restricted, the general trend shows improvement. In the Philippines, the security situation has started to improve along with progress in the peace talks between the parties, and with the ceasefire supervised by a Joint Coordination Committee for the Cessation of Hostilities and by an International Monitoring Team, under Malaysian command. DG ECHO continued to provide assistance to displaced persons still living in evacuation centres, and supported the IDP return process. At the end of 2010, the number of people still displaced did not exceed 25 000, which confirmed the relevance of phasing out humanitarian aid in favour of longer-term instruments.

As regards civil protection, the EU **Civil Protection Mechanism** was activated 28 times during the year (11 times within and 17 times outside the EU), to respond to e.g. floods in Pakistan, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Benin, Tajikistan and Colombia; earthquake and cholera epidemics in Haiti; an earthquake in Chile; an oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico; a violent windstorm (Xynthia) affecting Western Europe; forest fires in France, Portugal and Israel; snowfalls in the UK and the Netherlands; hurricanes and tropical storms in Guatemala and Haiti; and finally the chemical accident in Hungary where several villages were flooded by red sludge from a local aluminium plant. 48

experts were dispatched inside and outside the EU as part of 12 assessment and coordination missions.

The preparatory action on an EU rapid response capability for 2010 (a European Parliament initiative which started in 2008 and was renewed in 2009 and for the last time in 2010) yielded good projects and supported further development in the area of modules. In 2010, four European rapid response capabilities developed and on standby under this programme were deployed for the first time to emergencies, namely an advanced medical post with surgery and a water purification unit to Haiti following the earthquake, a high capacity pumping module to the floods in Poland and in Moldova and a technical assistance and support team to Haiti for the cholera epidemics.

The number of transport operations increased dramatically in 2010 (55, of which 50 through direct grants and 5 under the framework contract with a transport broker).

A review of the current civil protection policy started in 2010 is still ongoing.

The table below shows how EU **funding** for humanitarian aid and civil protection was allocated by region in 2010, according to the needs-based principle (in thousands of euros).

Region/country	Amount	%
<b>Africa</b>	<b>468.550</b>	<b>42%</b>
Sudan & Chad	169.000	
Central Africa	84.750	
Horn of Africa	96.000	
West Africa	87.100	
Southern Africa, Indian Ocean	31.700	
<b>Middle East, Mediterranean, Caucasus</b>	<b>98.000</b>	<b>9%</b>
Middle East, Mediterranean	96.000	
Caucasus	2.000	
<b>Asia</b>	<b>281.445</b>	<b>25%</b>
Central and South West Asia	198.295	
Central South Asia	34.400	
South East and East Asia	48.750	
<b>Latin America, Caribbean &amp; Pacific</b>	<b>158.500</b>	<b>14%</b>
Latin America	34.500	
Caribbean & Pacific	124.000	
<b>Civil Protection</b>	<b>28.061</b>	<b>3%</b>
Inside EU	14.407	
Rapid Response preparatory action	6.846	
Outside EU	6.808	
<b>Worldwide (capacity building, technical assistance, support)</b>	<b>80.304</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1.114.860</b>	<b>100%</b>

Unlike civil protection, DG ECHO does not in general deliver humanitarian aid directly on the ground but fulfils its mandate by providing funding to about 200 **partners** composed of non-governmental organisations, United Nations agencies, other international organisations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent Societies and some specialised agencies from EU Member States.

It is important for DG ECHO to have a wide range of partners, as this allows it to cover a growing list of needs in different parts of the world, often in increasingly complex situations. DG ECHO-managed grants and contributions are made by selecting the best proposals received for covering the needs of the most vulnerable. In 2010, funding was distributed among DG ECHO's partners as follows: NGOs 50 %, UN agencies 39 % and international organisations 11 %.

Humanitarian organisations are faced with increasingly **limited access to beneficiaries**, on the one hand due to tightening of the humanitarian space by governments and non-governmental actors, who disregard even the most basic protection afforded under international humanitarian law, and on the other hand as a result of security constraints. More and more, governments are imposing restrictions on the delivery of humanitarian aid (e.g. Sri Lanka). In many conflict zones (e.g. DRC, Somalia, Sudan) humanitarian workers see particularly brutal methods of warfare, including the targeting of civilians and frequently the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war. The incidence of attacks on humanitarian aid workers, including expulsions and killings, appears to be on the rise. Donors have to face the fact that not only is the safety of humanitarian staff at risk, but also the funding and infrastructure that they provide. Some governments are willing to go to the extreme of expropriating or 'borrowing' funds and property financed by donors and/or expelling humanitarian aid organisations once they have been stripped of their assets.

### **Humanitarian and civil protection assistance policy**

At policy level, many of the overarching policy issues regarding humanitarian aid are reflected in the 2007 **European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid** and its Action Plan. A mid-term review of the Consensus Action Plan was completed in autumn 2010<sup>4</sup>, which confirmed solid progress in implementing all action areas. Results of the mid-term review are available at [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/policies/consensus\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/policies/consensus_en.htm).

Acute food and nutrition insecurity continued to affect a large number of vulnerable populations, i.e. some 10 % of the close to one billion food-insecure people in the world. In March, the Commission adopted a **Communication on Humanitarian Food Assistance**<sup>5</sup>. It sets out the policy framework for EU humanitarian action to strengthen efforts to address food insecurity in humanitarian crises, looking for the most appropriate mix of response tools to provide the most efficient and effective food assistance in a given humanitarian context.

The Commission also presented proposals to reinforce the **EU's capacity to respond to disasters**. The Communication<sup>6</sup> aims to improve effectiveness, coherence and visibility by building on the main components of its response, i.e. humanitarian aid and civil protection, as well as military support where needed and appropriate, within and outside the EU. Lessons learnt from Haiti and Pakistan, as well as from recent natural disasters within Europe, will shape proposals for the way ahead.

Following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the Commission is working, in close consultation with Member States and other stakeholders, on the establishment of a **European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps (EVHAC)**<sup>7</sup> as required by Article 214(5). A

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<sup>4</sup> COM(2010) 722, SEC(2010) 1505.

<sup>5</sup> COM(2010) 126 ([http://ec.europa.eu/echo/policies/food\\_assistance\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/policies/food_assistance_en.htm)).

<sup>6</sup> COM(2010) 600 final and SEC(2010) 1243/1242  
[http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_2010-2014/georgieva/hot\\_topics/european\\_disaster\\_response\\_capacity\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/georgieva/hot_topics/european_disaster_response_capacity_en.htm)

<sup>7</sup> COM(2010) 683  
[http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_2010-2014/georgieva/hot\\_topics/voluntary\\_humanitarian\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/georgieva/hot_topics/voluntary_humanitarian_en.htm)

Communication was adopted in November, with the aim of enabling European citizens to make a contribution to aid efforts and underlining European values such as **solidarity** with people in need. The Communication will be followed by pilot actions in 2011, *the European Year of Volunteering*, and by the preparation of a legislative proposal to set up the EVHAC.

A special **Eurobarometer survey** carried out in 2010 on humanitarian aid revealed a high level of solidarity among EU citizens with victims of conflict and natural disasters outside the EU. Eight out of ten citizens think it is important that the EU funds humanitarian aid outside its borders.

The Commission supports **disaster preparedness** actions in regions prone to natural disasters, so as to help local communities to react rapidly and efficiently when disaster occurs, allowing many lives to be saved. The Commission continued its support to the DIPECHO programmes launched in 2009 and new ones in Southern Africa, Central Asia, South-East Asia and Central America. Contribution to disaster preparedness goes well beyond DIPECHO action plans as many of the major humanitarian financing decisions include disaster preparedness or mitigation of disaster impacts as an objective. Mainstreaming is based on activities related to infrastructure support, advocacy and public awareness, small-scale mitigation, mapping and data computerisation, early warning systems, education, institutional strengthening and climate change activities.

Under its **civil protection** mandate, DG ECHO encourages and facilitates cooperation between the 31 States<sup>8</sup> participating in the Civil Protection (CP) Mechanism and Financial Instrument. In doing so, it seeks to improve the effectiveness of systems for preventing and protecting against natural, technological or man-made disasters in Europe. For example in 2010 the Commission issued a guidance paper on national risk assessment and mapping for disaster management, which was drafted together with the national authorities of the Member States. It is now expected that Member States will further develop national risk management processes, in the context of which they will make use of those guidelines. This will be an important step towards enhancing disaster risk management culture in the EU. The implementation of the CP Mechanism and Financial Instrument ensures that people, the environment, property and cultural heritage are better protected in the event of disasters. In the area of preparedness EU support focuses on early warning systems, modules and the Civil Protection Mechanism's training programme (over 870 experts were trained in 2010 and four full-scale exercises were supported). In addition, the Commission gave financial support to a number of preparedness cooperation projects (e.g. improvement of the early warning system for 30 European countries, by extending the forecast periods to five days and by including rain and flood warnings).

Assistance based on resources made available by Member States is provided within the EU and third countries struck by disasters, following a request from the government of the country concerned.

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<sup>8</sup> The 27 EU Member States, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Croatia.